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TAVISTOCK URBAN DISTRICT



ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the

Year ended 31st December, 1959

Public Health and Housing Committee

The following members of the Council served on the above Committee during the year:—

<i>Chairman:</i>	H. MOORE
<i>Vice-Chairman:</i>	MRS. H. T. GILLIES
<i>Members:</i>	G. P. CLARK
	W. A. HAYWARD
	E. H. KNAPE
	MRS. D. L. H. PINDER
	F. G. QUANT
	W. C. RAWLING

Public Health Staff

Medical Officer of Health

E. D. ALLEN-PRICE, M.D., CH.B., D.P.H.

Surveyor and Public Health Inspector

R. J. CONNOLLY, M.I.P.H.E., C.R.S.I.

Additional Public Health Inspector and Meat Inspector

M. E. NORTHCOMBE, A.R.S.H., C.R.S.I.

M.O.H. Secretary

MISS P. B. FLETCHER

Meteorological Observer

MR. T. H. HARRIS



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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit this, my twenty-third annual report, for the year ended 31st December, 1959.

The general health of the town has been good throughout the year.

The crude birth rate for the town, although 0·2 higher than last year is still considerably below that of the country as a whole. The crude death rate, whilst still remaining higher than the national figure, has dropped by 1·3 since last year.

SECTION "A"

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area (Statute Acres)	2,098
Population—1931 Census	5,130
Population—1951 Census	5,889
Estimated home population—Mid 1959	6,190
Number of inhabited houses	1,948
Rateable Value	£89,018
Product of the Penny Rate	£352 13 10
Loan Debt	£610,155 6 10

VITAL STATISTICS

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Live Births	27	38	65
Legitimate	27	38	
Illegitimate	—	—	
Deaths	43	50	93
			<i>England and Wales</i>
Live Births			
Number	65		
Live Birth Rate per 1,000 population ...	10·5		16·5
Corrected Birth Rate	12·07		
Illegitimate Live Births % of Total Live Births	—		
Stillbirths			
Number	1		
Stillbirth rate per 1000 total live and still births	15·1		20·7
Total Live and Still births	66		
Infant Deaths (deaths under one year)	nil		
Infant Mortality Rates			
Total infant deaths per 1,000 total live births	—		20·0
Legitimate deaths per 1,000 legitimate live births	—		
Illegitimate deaths per 1,000 illegitimate live births	—		
Neo-natal Mortality Rate (deaths under 4 weeks, per 1,000 total live births)	—		

Early Neo-natal Mortality Rate (deaths under 1 week per 1,000 total live births)	—	
Perinatal Mortality Rate (Stillbirths and deaths under 1 week combined per 1,000 total live and still births)	15.1	
Maternal Mortality (including abortion)		
Number of deaths	nil	
Rate per 1,000 total live and still births	—	
Crude Death Rate per 1,000 population	15.0	11.6
Corrected death rate	9.9	

Year	Population	Birth Rate	Death Rate
1955	6,220	9.6	18.6
1956	6,190	14.4	16.5
1957	6,210	11.4	18.0
1958	6,180	10.3	16.3
1959	6,190	10.5	15.0

The chief causes of death were as follows:

Tuberculosis	2
Infective and Parasitic diseases	1
Cancer	12
Vascular diseases	22
Coronary diseases	15
Heart diseases	9
Other Circulatory diseases	2
Pneumonia	4
Bronchitis	2
Gastritis, etc.	1
Hyperplasia of the Prostate	1
Other ill-defined diseases	17
Accidental causes	4
Suicide	1

AGES OF DEATH TABLE

Age at Death	Male	Female
Under 1 year	—	—
1 - 5 years	1	—
5 - 15 years	—	—
15 - 25 years	—	—
25 - 35 years	—	1
35 to 45 years	—	1
45 to 55 years	2	—
55 to 65 years	8	5
65 to 75 years	10	15
75 and over	22	28
TOTALS:	43	50

SECTION "B"

GENERAL PROVISION OF THE HEALTH SERVICES

The general provision of the Health Services remain as in previous years.

Welfare Foods:

The W.V.S. continue to give most vaulable assistance distributing these foods to the general public.

Maternity Accommodation:

During the year 221 babies were born in the Tavistock Maternity Home as follows:

Tavistock Urban District	42
Tavistock Rural District	108
Others	71

Ambulance Service:

The St. John Ambulance Brigade, under delegated powers from the Local County Health Authority, continued to give a highly satisfactory 24 hour cover for the whole district.

Doctor Budding, the Assistant County Medical Officer has submitted the following report on her work during the year:

"There have been a few changes in staff—Captain Dally (R.N., retd.) retired as dental officer in July 1959 and Mrs. Carter took his place temporarily. Mr. MacCormick, F.R.C.S., took the place of Rear Admiral Pomfret as oculist for the area in January 1959. For the rest we are fully staffed in accordance with establishment ruling.

"The routine work continued during the year and we have been able to "catch up" with some of the work neglected during the previous three years through poliomyelitis campaigns. However, in May/June a further concentrated period of advertising and lunch hour and evening sessions for poliomyelitis injections for the 15-25 age groups led to a few more young people coming forward for their injections. The response was fair on the whole in this age group, although remarkably good compared with the response in other parts of the country (and county). These young people have also maintained their interest in that they have all returned for their 3rd and final doses, which is encouraging.

"This brings me to the subject of preventive inoculations. It is now possible to inoculate babies against five diseases with only seven visits to the doctor. i.e. smallpox, whooping cough, diphtheria, tetanus and poliomyelitis. These can all be completed by the 14th month of the baby's life. There then only remains one further injection (against diphtheria and/or tetanus) just before or when a child starts school. I should like to emphasise this "booster" injection which is not being asked for as often as it should, but which is most necessary. There was, during 1959, an epidemic of diphtheria in a London infant's school, with one death. These children had not been immunised at all, or had not completed the course with the booster dose.

"Protection is also available for those of 13 years of age against tuberculosis and 70% have availed themselves of this.

“There has been a steady demand for tetanus prophylaxis during the year amongst older children particularly, and also adults. This gives valuable protection and is very necessary in a moorland area such as Tavistock and district where horses roam freely.

“The work amongst the mentally retarded (children and adults) who are unable to benefit from schooling, leaves room for improvement, but with the new Mental Health Act there should be more attention paid to this group during the next few years.

“A certain amount of visiting is done amongst the aged, particularly those living alone. This too is work that should, and will be, expanded in the future.

“There have been evening classes for “expectant” fathers in the Clinic and also some films have been shown of interest to all parents. This work will be expanded now that we possess a projector and screen of our own.

“The Tavistock Clinic continues to be used every day of the week and is proving itself extremely useful and valuable and I think an asset to the town and district.”

SECTION “C”

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE AREA

Water Supply:

Since the passing of the North Devon Water Board Act a number of years ago there has been a gradual assimilation of local water supplies by the services of the Board. At the present time the whole of this vast area of West Devon resolves itself, with the small exception of Okehampton Borough, between the North Devon Water Board and the water undertaking of the Corporation of Plymouth. This rationalisation of water supplies has undoubtedly had a most remarkable and beneficial effect on the rural community, particularly farming, but although the Water Board have already laid many hundreds of miles of pipeline, their job is by no means yet done, and neither is that area which is the responsibility of the Corporation completely served.

Whilst assessing this vast improvement to the supply of water one is naturally led to the actual quality of this commodity. Taking firstly the water itself: this is predominantly surface water, either collected and stored, as is the case of the Corporation, or taken direct from an upland surface supply of seepage from vast collections of peat, direct from a river, or underground storage, as in the case of Taw Marsh. The natural qualities of these waters is interesting in so far as they are acidic, and by reason of this are bacteriostatic. Much has been said in the past about the malicious action of acidic water on metals such as lead or zinc, but this propensity can be very largely eliminated without reduction to full neutrality whilst still retaining its bacteriostatic qualities. One is, therefore, driven to the question as to the necessity, or even desirability, on any public health grounds of chlorinating such sources of supply. In the case of Okehampton Borough, which I have taken a most lively interest in for the past quarter of a century, no chlorination has ever been allowed, neither has any bacteriological contamination been discovered, owing, the Surveyor thinks, to the efficiency of his filters, but I would suggest that this bacteriostatic action of the water is an important contribution to its purity.

As everyone knows chlorine is a most violent poison in its raw state, owing to its intense chemical activity. In one of my authorities, which has of necessity, owing to excessive pollution, to super-chlorinate the water, the tests on the behaviour of cut flowers in this supply are somewhat remarkable, as they have a length of life several days less than the same flowers watered by a supply from the local river. What the effects of this element chlorine are on the animal constitution I have no evidence, but I feel that before such pure waters, coming from the Dartmoor highlands, are molested with chemicals of this nature, searching enquiry should be made into the scientific need for such treatment. My recommendation is that chlorination of these waters should be restricted for emergency purposes only, as when major structural engineering projects are in operation with untested labour.

Mr. Young, District Engineer to the North Devon Water Board has presented the following report for the period since the Board took over the town's supply:

"The exceptionally dry summer of 1959 threw a heavy strain on the town's source of supply at Kilworthy and the reliable yield of 300,000 gals/day was not sufficient to meet the demand which at times was over 400,000 gals/day. The supply was supplemented by the pumping from springs at Wilminstone Quarry and by laying a temporary pipe overland from the Board's nearest main at Heathfield, this pipe discharged into the collecting chambers at Kilworthy and was fed from there to the reservoir by gravity in the usual way. In spite of this increased output it was necessary to impose some restrictions on the use of water and mains in sections of the town were shut off between midnight and 6-0 a.m. for a short period.

"During the year a scheme was put in hand to supply Tavistock entirely from a new reservoir now being built at Brentor. This scheme consists of a 9" dia. main from Brentor to Tavistock which will discharge direct into Kilworthy reservoir and also provide a high pressure supply to Whitchurch Down reservoir at a later date. These proposals will have the effect of making the collecting area at Kilworthy, the re-pumping station at Down Road, and the pumping station at Wilminstone Quarry redundant. Water will be supplied from the Board's works at Prewley and will be chlorinated at source.

"Due to the age of the mains and services in the Urban District there is at present a rather high rate of wastage and work has started on the installation of waste detection meters at various selected points in the town, the first of these is in operation and has produced reasonably satisfactory results.

"No renewal of mains has been carried out during the year, but when leaks have occurred on communication pipes these have been entirely renewed whenever practicable and this practice will gradually lessen the amount of waste. Figures have been included in the annual estimates for the coming year to allow for renewal of a short length of main and various defective fittings.

"The standard of purity of the Kilworthy supply has remained consistently high, the number of coliform bacilli and bact. coli. occurring in the raw water have varied from 550 per 100ml. to nil, but no unsatisfactory report has been received on a sample of treated water and this indicates

that the chlorinating equipment is working satisfactorily. Dechlorination is also carried out to lessen the taste of chlorine in the water. No case of contamination has occurred at Whitchurch Down reservoir. Fortnightly bacteriological samples have been taken throughout the year.

“Chemical analyses shows that the water is a high standard of organic quality with a hardness of about 60 ppm and a pH value of 6·9, a slight deposit of iron is present.”

Sewage Disposal:

Both Crowndale and Whitchurch sewage disposal works have continued to deal with the sewage as in previous years. Ground work towards the construction of a new works has continued steadily with recordings of flow, etc., being taken on both existing works, the tracing and minor repair of some sections of the sewers and also the gauging of sewer flows.

Samples of sewage effluent and river water, both above and below the outfalls, taken throughout the year have for the most part been satisfactory.

Refuse Collection:

As in previous years a weekly system of domestic and trade refuse collection has been operative. During the very dry summer trouble has been experienced with the tip catching fire, and this continued for some time. Every effort was made to keep these fires under control. A further extension of the tippings area will be required in the near future.

Swimming Bath:

The Council's open air swimming pool was opened to the public on 23rd May and remained open until 26th September.

The proposed temporary improvements to the pool were abandoned in the light of the more permanent chlorination and treatment proposals. In the meantime the pool was chlorinated by hand treatment, daily tests being made throughout the season to ensure that a satisfactory standard was maintained. With careful supervision this proved very satisfactory.

The usual arrangements were operative for the use of the pool by parties of school children under instruction and supervision.

Sanitary Inspection of the Area:

In the table following the number of visits made in connection with routine work, in addition to work itemised in the various sections, are shown.

Drainage	67
Rodent Control	45
Housing Applications	112
Housing Management	995
Sanitary Defects and Complaints	21
Pet Shops	1
Disinfection	1
Disinfestation	4
Sewage Works and Refuse Tip	135
Special Visits	471
Sampling	218

Factories Act, 1937 and 1948—Inspections, etc.

Tables showing the number of inspections made, cases in which defects were found, and the number of outworkers in the town, are set out in the Tables at the end of this report.

Weather:

The total rainfall for the year was 54.48 inches. It will be seen that November and December contributed just over 22 inches to this total.

	Rainfall	Average Dry Temperature
January	7.94	39.5
February	0.38	41.5
March	6.24	46.7
April	5.43	49.9
May	0.86	57.0
June	1.86	59.9
July	2.15	64.2
August	1.76	63.7
September	0.18	61.6
October	5.40	56.4
November	11.09	46.7
December	11.19	44.5

SECTION "D"

HOUSING

Two dwellings were completed during the year on the Buctor Park Estate for occupation by the Devon Constabulary.

A total of 275 dwellings have been completed and occupied since the building commenced in 1946.

31 houses were erected by private enterprise and occupied during the year in addition to the above figures.

There were 129 applicants for Council houses on the register on 31st December, 1959. Sixty-four of these applicants were resident outside the urban area.

The following list indicates the different types of accommodation required by the applicants:

Single bedroom requirements	33 applicants.
Two bedroom requirements	50 applicants.
Three bedroom requirements	42 applicants.
Four bedroom requirements	4 applicants.

Twelve applicants, including five sitting tenants, availed themselves of the Council's offer to allow them to purchase Council Houses.

On 31st December, 1959, the Council controlled the following properties:

4. bedroom houses (all built prior to 1946)	4
3. bedroom houses (116 pre 1946 and 121 post 1946=237, less 42 sold to occupiers, etc.	195
2. bedroom houses (24 pre 1946 and 89 post 1946= 113, less 3 sold to occupiers)	110
2. bedroom old persons Bungalows (all post 1946)	12
Single bedroom Maisonettes (all post 1946)	44
2. bedroom Maisonettes (all post 1946)	3
2. bedroom Bungalows (all post 1946)	4
	<hr/>
TOTAL	372

SECTION “E”

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Milk:

As in previous years two premises within the Urban area are registered by the Council under the Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949.

Monthly samples of milk were taken from retailers selling milk in the Urban Area, and the results obtained are summarised in the following table.

<i>Type of Milk</i>	<i>No. of Samples</i>	<i>Passed</i>	<i>Failed</i>
Pasteurized	29	29	—
T.T.	35	28	7
	—	—	—
TOTAL	64	57	7
	—	—	—

Other Food Premises:

Regular inspections were made during the year of the various food premises in the town. The number of food premises in the area, by type of business is:

Grocers	23
Butchers and Stalls	16
Greengrocers	9
Fishmongers	2
Bakers	8
Sweet Confectioners	10
Chain Stores	2
Cafés	10
Hotels	11
Guest Houses, Bed and Breakfast, etc.	25

The number of food premises registered under Section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955, for the manufacture of sausages and preserved foods=9, and for the sale of Ice Cream=26.

A total of nine ice cream samples were taken during the year. The results were as follows:

Grade 1	9
---------------	---

No premises in the area is used for the manufacture of Ice Cream.

During the year 100 inspections of food premises were made, and no formal action under the Act was taken.

The Council has organised no educational events in connection with food handling, etc., throughout the year.

Condemned foodstuffs are collected and disposed of on the Council's refuse tip, with the exception of meat and offal from the abattoir.

It was found necessary to subject the entire stock of one small shop to examination on change of ownership. A comparatively small amount of foodstuffs were condemned. No other special examinations of stocks have been necessary.

Meat Inspection:

Meat inspection has been fully carried out by your Inspectors at the abattoirs during the year. 17,167 carcasses were dealt with, being a decrease of 742 under the preceeding year's kill. Meat inspection involved 1085 visits to the abattoirs.

Fuller details of the number of animals killed and inspected and the carcasses, parts of organs, condemned are set out in the table at the end of this report.

Condemned Meat and Offals:

Condemned meat and offals were collected from the abattoir by approved contractors.

Samples taken under Section 3 Food and Drugs Act, 1938.

Gin
Whisky
Scones and Butter
Malt Vinegar
Sardines
Creamed Rice Pudding
Tonic Wine
Lemon Crystals
Red Salmon
Sauce
Lemon Flavouring
Ground Ginger
Coffee and Chicory Essence
Creamed Sago
Saffron Flour
Minced Beef and Gravy
Pineapple Crush
Chocolate Flavoured Sponge
Meat Paste
Wholemeal Bread
Malt Vinegar
Stewed Steak
Ground Almonds
Gin
Milk—15 samples

ALL GENUINE

Food Poisoning:

No case of food poisoning was notified during the year.

SECTION “ F ”

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS
AND OTHER DISEASES

Notifiable infectious diseases which have occurred during the year are set out in the following table:

Diseases notified by Medical Practitioners:

	Whooping Cough		Measles		Polio Non-P.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 1 year	—	1	—	—	—	—
1 - 2 years	—	1	—	—	—	—
3 - 4 years	—	2	2	3	—	—
5 - 9 years	1	1	12	3	—	—
10 - 14 years	—	—	—	—	—	—
15 - 25 years	—	—	—	—	—	—
25 years and over	—	—	—	—	—	1
TOTAL	1	5	14	6	—	1

Diseases notified by School Authorities:
Nil.

Diphtheria and Poliomyelitis:

No cases of Diphtheria were notified during the year. One case of Non-Paralytic Poliomyelitis was notified, the patient being admitted to hospital on 31st October 1959 and discharged on 6th December 1959.

Tuberculosis:

During the year one death from Pulmonary Tuberculosis was recorded, and six new cases were notified. At the end of the year 43 cases remained on the Register as follows.

PULMONARY		NON-PULMONARY	
M.	F.	M.	F.
16	18	4	5

In conclusion I would thank the Chairman and Council for the ready hearing I have received at all times and the Public Health Staff and others who have materially assisted in the preparation of this report.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Councillors,

Your obedient Servant,

E. D. ALLEN-PRICE,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

CARCASES AND OFFAL INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED IN WHOLE OR IN PART.

	<i>Cattle excluding Cows</i>	<i>Cows</i>	<i>Calves</i>	<i>Lambs and Sheep</i>	<i>Pigs</i>	<i>Horses</i>
Number killed (if known)	1876	165	277	6778	8071	—
Number Inspected	1876	165	277	6778	8071	—
All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci: Whole carcasses condemned	11	2	6	36	12	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned ..	358	48	—	479	104	—
Percentage of the number inspected affected with dis- ease other than tuberculosis and cysticerci ..	15.7%	30.3%	2.17%	7.6%	1.4%	—
Tuberculosis only: Whole carcasses condemned ...	4	1	—	—	—	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned ...	49	8	—	—	100	—
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	2.8%	5.45%	—	—	1.2%	—
Cysticercosis: Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned ..	14	—	—	—	—	—
Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigeration	14	—	—	—	—	—
Generalised and totally condemned	—	—	—	—	—	—

FACTORIES ACTS, 1937 AND 1948.

1. INSPECTIONS FOR PURPOSES OF PROVISIONS AS TO HEALTH (including inspections made by Public Health Inspectors).

<i>Premises</i>	<i>Number on Register</i>	<i>Number of</i>		
		<i>Inspec- tions</i>	<i>Written Notices</i>	<i>Occupiers Prosecuted</i>
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities ...	9	6	—	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the local Authorities ...	56	41	—	—
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authorities (excluding out-worker's premises)	4	15	—	—
TOTAL ...	69	62	—	—

2. CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND.

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Number of cases in which defects were found</i>				<i>Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted</i>
	<i>Found</i>	<i>Remedied</i>	<i>To H.M. Inspector</i>	<i>By H.M. Inspector</i>	
Want of Cleanliness ...	1	1	—	1	—
Overcrowding	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable Temperature	1	1	—	1	—
Inadequate Ventilation	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences :					
(a) Insufficient	1	1	—	1	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	—	—	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for the sexes	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences (not including out-work)	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	3	3	—	3	—

3. OUTWORK (Sections 110 and 111).

<i>Nature of Work</i>	Section 110			Section 111		
	<i>No. of out-workers in August list required by Section 110 (1) c</i>	<i>No. of cases of default in sending lists to Council</i>	<i>No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists</i>	<i>No. of instances of work in unwhole-some premises</i>	<i>Notices served</i>	<i>Prosecutions</i>
<i>Wearing Apparel (Making, etc.)</i>	1	—	—	—	—	—

